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TH. RIBOT: A STUDY



ONE day Painting found that she needed air. After having so long remained in doors, she fell in love with the breezes, the sun and the green freshness of the woods. Then idyls were discovered at every turning of the road, elegies in the gray shadows and violets in the tints of the clouds. All nature peopled herself with infinite charms; the least details surrounded themselves with aureoles of shining light; and the canvases which brought all this to us were fairly trembling with the life of the open air, impregnated with the odors of earth and the strong perfume of flowering plants. They expressed also the human poems found upon the road; never were there representations so bucolic as those of that time.

The large majority of artists consecrate themselves to this task; the extreme portrayal of air. If we tire of the representations of the fields, often our only resource is in pictures of the sea. Interiors are, in their turn, affected. They also become luminous. They take their part in the fanfare of *plein-air*; and if they do not attain the dominant note, they excuse themselves therefor as best they may.

Clear and precise in both design and sentiment, these men unite, above the remains of the classic and romantic schools, the traditions of French art. With a knowledge and skill at least equal, but with less liberty of style, they attach themselves, through the painters of the eighteenth century, to Poussin and Lesseur. It is a beautiful *role*, to which no one should object; only, in the midst of all this excellence, one often regrets never finding the picture which can be looked upon with the feeling of complete repose; which solicits and retains thought by the calm of its representation, by the profound charm of life and color.

All this would be regretted at the *Champs Elysees* if Henner were not there; and here (*Champs de Mars*) if Ribot and Carriere

Written
at the
time
of the
Salons
of the
Champs
de Mars
and the
Champs
Elysees
in Paris
this
spring.

should desert. Ribot! of the Normand race, intense, self-centered; living in perpetual companionship with his artistic dreams and his profound knowledge of the history of his art. Not that this dream is complicated. On the contrary, it is simple with the directness which belongs to the masters. He does not require, in appearance at least, the arduous study of the relations of tones; nor must he sound the depths of the problems of composition.

His aim is different. In his delight in perpetuating in warm colors the living flesh, in enclosing light in the shadow masses where the eye rests quietly, he always stops at a general expression; at the study of life as a whole. His thoughtful figures do not contract under the empire of a single sensation. The emotions which forever condemn figures painted to portray a single feeling of joy or pain are absent from his canvases; but the artistic emotion, the intrinsic emotion, abounds in them. It is this which furnishes such a wealth of material life to the canvases of Ribot, which are always the same; the flow of the blood under the surface of the skin, the beating of the arteries, the throbbing of the nerves. Add to this the calm forehead and the intensity of glance and the eternal man stands before us; and so profound and at the same time so simple is the work of the master, that each of his pictures gives us the impression of an approach to the absolute. When we leave them, it seems that whole centuries of art have lived for us in these canvases.

"*Le Livre des Images*" (The Picture Book) leaves with us an impression which is fixed forever. The calm meditation of the figures, the absence of all action implying fatigue or indicating a change of posture, make impossible all thought foreign to the picture. We lose ourselves in contemplation of hands and faces which make us feel the poignant mystery of life. Unique presentation, which impresses upon us something of the intellectual and physical repose of which Ribot is the exponent. The calm comes to us as the normal diapason in the gamut of art expression.

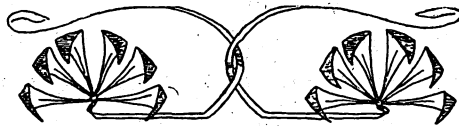
Translated
from
"L'Art Francais"
by
Emily G. Gibson

TH. RIBOT:
A STUDY

Other works of the same character will come to us from the hermitage of Colombes, where Ribot secludes himself. In the silent house surrounded with trees, where the old furniture and sober walls show in the somber light, nothing disturbs the deep calm; and when the master descends from his studio to receive a visitor he seems, with his expressive face and piercing glance, a personage from one of his own pictures.

Naturalist, classicist or realist? If it were necessary to find an appellation for the master, it would be *humaine*, because there is found in him more of nature than most of us discover outside.

J. LE FUSTEC



M. Degas is very little known to the public; he never exhibits in the annual salons, and very rarely in any other exhibitions. His aristocratic temperament and his strong respect for his art disincline him to expose to the general and unintelligent gaze works to appreciate which demands a highly developed artistic education.

*On the art of
Degas,
the painter
of ballet effects,
or "meditations
on dancing."*



How chilling, how dead, how tiresome is a museum of sculpture! How unsympathetic those rows of statues gazing fixedly into space with their big white eyes! How repulsive a collection of plaster casts, with their crude whiteness glaring against bare walls! * * *

*How not to
show
sculpture.*

Sculpture is not an unsociable art.

THEODORE CHILD